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18 October 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Review of Sam Adam's "Communism and Cambodia"

1. This paper is a potentially valuable historical study which appears to be well researched and documented. There are several instances, however, where the available evidence is pushed beyond the breaking point. Some of the conclusions sprinkled through the paper are based on meager information or circumstantial evidence. These faults could be corrected, however, without changing most of the basic points. Our specific comments are limited to that portion of the paper covering the period after 1967 since additional research on our part would be required prior to undertaking a critique of the previous period. In addition, those portions of the paper we have not yet received are likely to be the ones in which our interest will be highest. These sections deal with the current strength and structure of the KC political apparatus and military forces and their present relationship to the Vietnamese Communists.

2. Some of our specific comments, keyed to the appropriate pages in the text, are presented below:

(a) Page 8 of the Summary. The evidence for a dramatic increase in the number of Khmer cadre coming down the trail is tenuous at best. Our infiltration data has never permitted us to determine the ethnic origin of the personnel moving through the pipeline.

(b) Page 60 and accompanying table. We have no other sources which confirm [redacted] statements regarding Khmer infiltration. In fact, a number of knowledgeable sources imply that it hasn't yet surpassed the "hundreds" annual rate.

(c) Page 61. It is not clear that the communists actually ran these rebellions.

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(d) Page 63. Has communist initiation of and/or control of these rebellions actually been established, or is it merely conjectured?

(e) Page 75. The terms Khmer Viet Minh, Khmer Rouge and Khmer Leou were used interchangeably during the period.

(f) Page 79. (footnote) Despite the concise nature of reports [redacted] experience has shown them to be of doubtful validity.

(g) Page 87. Lon Nol's claim of 400-450 rebel soldiers does not seem understated. If rebel sympathizers were included the number would be higher.

(h) Page 87A. It is doubtful that two well-armed KC battalions existed in the southeast prior to the coup.

(i) Page 109. The paragraph on Military schools seems to imply that "tens of thousands" of Khmers have received training in VC/NVA run military schools located either in North Vietnam or Cambodia. We do not believe the number exceeds a few thousand. The author has agreed that this paragraph needs to be reworded.

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3. Other specific comments and editorial suggestions are included on the copy of the report that was reviewed by Indochina Division analysts. (attached)

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[redacted]
Chief
South Vietnam Branch

Attachment

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